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*For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guid-
ance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the begin-
ning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.*

(54) Title: FUNCTIONALIZED POLYMERS AND IMPROVED VULCANIZATES THEREFROM

(57) Abstract: A functionalized polymer defined by the formula π -R₁- α , where π is a polymer chain, R₁ is a bond or a divalent organic group, and α is a sulfur-containing heterocycle.

WO 2004/020475 A1

AMENDED CLAIMS

[received by the International Bureau on 03 January 2004 (03.01.04);
original claims 1-2-6-7-8 amended; original claim 3 replaced by new claim 3;
original claim 4 cancelled; remaining claims unchanged (3 pages)]

What is claimed is:

1. A functional polymer that is defined by the formula

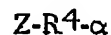


5 where π is a polymer chain, R^1 is a bond or a divalent organic group, and α is a sulfur-containing heterocycle selected from a thiirane, thietane, thiolane, thiazoline, dihydrothiophene, thiadiazine, thioxanthene, thianthrene, phenoxathiin, dihydroisothiazole, or thienofuran group or substituted form thereof.

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2. A method for preparing a functional polymer, the method comprising:
terminating a living polymer chain with a functionalizing agent where the functionalizing agent is defined by the formula

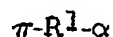
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where Z is a leaving group or an addition group, R^4 is a bond or a divalent organic group, and α is a sulfur-containing heterocycle selected from a thiirane, thietane, thiolane, thiazoline, dihydrothiophene, thiadiazine, thioxanthene, thianthrene, phenoxathiin, dihydroisothiazole, or thienofuran group or substituted form thereof.

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3. A method for preparing a cured tire component, the method comprising:
providing a rubber formulation comprising at least one vulcanizable rubber
25 and a filler, where the at least one vulcanizable rubber is a functional polymer that is defined by the formula



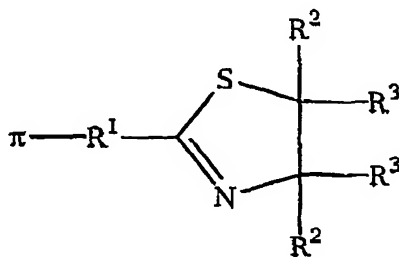
30 where π is a polymer chain, R^1 is a bond or a divalent organic group, and α is a sulfur-containing heterocycle selected from a thiirane, thietane, thiolane, thiazoline, dihydrothiophene, thiadiazine, thioxanthene, thianthrene,

phenoxarhiin, dihydroisothiazole, or thienofuran group or a substituted form thereof;

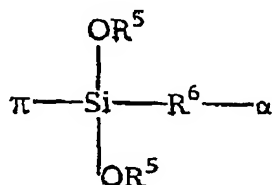
forming the rubber formulation into a green tire component;

vulcanizing the green tire component to form a cured tire component.

4. The polymer of claim 1, or the method of claim 3, where the functional polymer can be defined by the formula



where π is a polymer chain, R^1 is a bond or a divalent organic group, each R^2 is independently hydrogen or a monovalent organic group, each R^3 is independently hydrogen or a monovalent organic group, or where each R^3 combine with each other to form a divalent organic group; or where the functional polymer can be defined by the formula



where π is a polymer chain, each R^5 is independently a monovalent organic group, R^6 is a bond or a divalent organic group, and α is a sulfur-containing heterocycle.

5. The polymer of claim 1, or the method of claim 3, where R¹ includes the residue of an addition reaction between an addition group and a living polymer, and wherein the addition group comprises a nitrile group, a Schiff base, a ketone group, an aldehyde group, or an ester group.

6. The polymer of claim 1, or the method of claim 2 or 3, where the polymer chain is a rubbery polymer having a Tg that is less than 0°C.
- 5 7. The polymer of claim 1, or the method of claim 2 or 3, where the polymer chain is polybutadiene, polyisoprene, poly(styrene-co-butadiene), poly(styrene-co-butadiene-co-isoprene), poly(isoprene-co-styrene), or poly(butadiene-co-isoprene).
- 10 8. The method of claim 2, where Z comprises a halide, a thio alkoxide group, an alkoxide group, a dialkyl amine group, a nitrile group, a Schiff base, a ketone group, an aldehyde group, or an ester group.
9. The method of claim 3, where the filler is carbon black, silica or both.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/US 03/27081

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 C08C19/44 C08F8/34

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 C08C

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	EP 1 099 711 A (JSR CORP ; BRIDGESTONE CORP (JP)) 16 May 2001 (2001-05-16) abstract; claims; examples 1,2; table 1a page 6, line 40 - page 7, line 12 -----	1-10
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-/-		

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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- *S* document member of the same patent family

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C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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